A METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR DISTRIBUTED CACHING, PREFETCHING AND REPLICATION

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A technique for automatic, transparent, distributed, scalable and robust caching, prefetching, and replication in a computer network that request messages for a particular document follow paths from the clients to a home server that form a routing graph. Client request messages are routed up the graph towards the home server as would normally occur in the absence of caching. However, cache servers are located along the route, and may intercept requests if they can be serviced. In order to be able to service requests in this manner without departing from standard network protocols, the cache server needs to be able to insert a packet filter into the router associated with it, and needs also to proxy for the homer server from the perspective of the client.; Cache servers may cooperate to service client requests by caching and discarding documents based on its local load, the load on its neighboring caches, attached communication path load, and on document popularity. The cache servers can also implement security schemes and other document transformation features.